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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

## INFORMATION REPORT

50X1-HUM

COUNTRY USSR

SUBJECT Conditions in the Nica Kolkhoz near Liepaja, Latvia

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Income

2. "The kolkhoz members are remunerated according to the labour day units they have worked for the kolkhoz. These do not correspond to the actual working day. They vary with each type of farm job. For example, a groom caring for 10 horses the year round is supposed to have worked 365 labour day units (in this variety of work the labour day unit and the actual day do coincide); if he cares for 15 horses, however, his yearly labour day units are 547.5. Mowing is an unpredictable occupation as the amount to be mowed for a labour day unit cannot actually be mowed in one day.
3. "There is no hard and fast sum paid out for a labour day unit, only an understanding that the proper pay is 2.50 rubles in cash, 200 grams of wheat, 200 grams of rye, one kg of potatoes, 20-100 grams of fat and 20 grams of sugar. Actually the kolkhoz members can only be sure of getting the potatoes. The rest is often not forthcoming, and nobody has the responsibility to produce it. If there are no crops to share, the chairman simply says 'We have worked badly this year and must do better in the next.' (The state never takes less in compulsory deliveries, however bad the harvest may have been.) In 1950 the members of the Nica kolkhoz got 1.50 rubles in cash, 200 grams each of wheat and rye and one kg of potatoes. This was considered quite a good year, as one often gets less and the cash payment is often not made.
4. "Whenever the Soviet Latvian papers write about the incomes of kolkhoz members, they mention considerably higher payments per labour day. They should not be generally believed. There are three kolkhozes in Latvia, one being the 'Nakotne' kolkhoz.

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They have excellent equipment and plants of fertilizer, produce good harvests and make good payments to their members. If they lack anything, it is taken from other kolkhozes and given to them. They are kept on show for excursions of schoolchildren and visitors from other Soviet republics. The official explanation of why they are so much better off than the other kolkhozes is that the others are lazy and that their poverty is their own fault.

5. "All the talk about the electrification and radiofication of the kolkhozes is nonsense and may apply to the show kolkhozes only. Electrification and radiofication are expensive, and the kolkhoz must pay for them out of its own pocket. It does not have money for such things. The usual source of light in a kolkhoz is a small kerosene lamp without a cylinder. The price of electric current is 40 kopeks per kwh.

#### Private Ownership

6. "The kolkhoz members cannot possibly live on what they get from the kolkhoz. What keeps them alive is the kitchen garden plot of 0.5 hectares that every family, but not a single person, is allowed. The kolkhoz member works day in day out on the kolkhoz field, virtually without remuneration, to enable the kolkhoz to make the compulsory deliveries to the state and to keep its officials, and after his hard working day this same kolkhoz member goes to work on his own tiny plot to raise some food for himself and family.
7. "Almost every family keeps a cow on its little plot. They have the greatest difficulties in feeding it. In summer this cow may graze on the kolkhoz meadows with the kolkhoz cattle if the owner performs 10-15 labour day units gratis for the kolkhoz. No hay or straw is ever distributed to the kolkhoz members as the kolkhozes are chronically short of fodder themselves. Sometimes in the autumn the members are allowed to mow a little of grass from the ditch banks but never from a meadow, although the kolkhoz may not have mowed the meadow and may not plan to. In order to keep their cows over the winter the owners have to resort to theft. This is possible because there are no communal cowsheds on the Latvian kolkhozes and the kolkhoz cattle are kept in the sheds of the former farmers. A certain amount of fodder is issued for the communal cattle and the kolkhoz members steal from that. They cannot steal hay from the stacks that stand in the meadows through the winter as the theft would be betrayed by scattered hay. Theft of 'public property' is punished with forced labour.

#### Payments

8. "The farmers must pay heavy taxes on their garden plots and cattle and make deliveries in kind. The taxes for 0.5 hectares and a cow are something like 2000 rubles yearly, plus 100-200 rubles state loan per kolkhoz member. The farmers must sell a good deal of what they produce individually. They never drink the milk of their cow but sell it on the market at 3-4 rubles per litre. They also sell the potatoes and vegetables they grow. Potatoes bring in 1 ruble per kg in the autumn and 2 rubles in winter. They also sell all their eggs.
9. "The deliveries in kind from private farmers are 300 litres of milk from 0.5 hectares (if the farmer keeps a cow he must buy the milk from others who do), a little over 50 kg of meat, two eggs and 100 g of wool. No vegetables or potatoes need be delivered. Only one cow may be kept and two sheep. The number of hens and chickens is unrestricted. If a man keeps only two cows he need make no delivery in kind; if he adds a third he must deliver some milk to the state. The only milk a Latvian farmer ever drinks nowadays is goat's milk and it goes mainly to the children. Their work does not even provide them with sufficient bread. If the town bread is usually to be had in sufficient quantity, but there is a shortage of it in the country. [redacted] The bread had an enormous queue of farmers for bread at the Gaviene railway station. The bread had been brought there from the town of Grobina. Nobody can imagine how the kolkhoz peasants live and the misery in the countryside.

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10. "The kolkhozes are managed inefficiently. All the state cares about is to squeeze out the compulsory deliveries, which are many and various. First there is the 'crops norm' to the state, about one quarter of a really good harvest but extracted even when the harvest is bad. It depends on the number of hectares sown. Then comes the 'supplementary norm', a certain amount of grain delivered to the state over and above the compulsory delivery. Fortunately this depends on the quality of the harvest and not on the number of sown hectares as does the basic norm. Then comes the remuneration to the state-owned machine and tractor station. This about equals the basic delivery to the state and depends on the number of hectares the station has ploughed or harvested. Then next year's seed must be turned over to a seed collecting center. A certain small percentage of the harvest must also be set aside for aid to aged and disabled kolkhoz members (there is no social insurance for kolkhozniks as there is for industrial workers). Lastly, every kolkhoz must make an agreement with the market administration of its local centre (Liepaja is the centre for Nica) for the sale of some produce to get cash to pay the administration and to buy fertilizer and small equipment. The payment for the deliveries to the state is so small that it yields almost nothing. Most of the grain goes to the USSR. The seed grain is locked up in special warehouses, for if left with the kolkhoz the people would eat it.

Problems

11. "The machine and tractor stations are considered a plague as the payment for the equipment they supply, which the kolkhozes themselves are not allowed to own, is exorbitant. In the kolkhozes where manpower is not too short, the kolkhoz tries to do much of the work by hand and to use the services of the station as little as possible. One often sees the people cutting the grain with sickles.
12. "The output of the kolkhozes sinks with every year for two reasons:
- (a) The people are not interested in raising the output as they would get virtually nothing even if they exerted themselves.
  - (b) There is very little manure as the kolkhozes do not have enough cattle. What there is, is badly cared for and infected. In the Autumn of 1952, for example, foot and mouth disease made great ravages, particularly in Courland in the communes of Rucava and Dunika. There is too little hay or other fodder for the cattle. This winter (1952-53) even waterplants have been fed to them. Small branches and pine needles have been the usual winter fodder for several years. In spring the cattle are skin and bones.
13. "A little artificial fertilizer is brought to Latvia from the USSR proper, but it is far from sufficient. Moreover, the transport is unorganized: the kolkhozes do not know of its arrival beforehand, it is transported without wrappings and just dumped down from the cars at the railway station. The kolkhoz may not know of its arrival for days or have no means to transport it so that most of it deteriorates at the station before it reaches the fields.
14. "The promises of kolkhozes to raise output, which are reported in the papers, have no significance. The kolkhoz members are forced to make such promises and they forget about them after the signatures are given.

Labor

15. "What the kolkhozes lack very much is manpower. Nobody works overtime, even at the harvest as such work brings no reward. The management drives the members only as long as the various deliveries are unfulfilled. In December 1952 schools were closed everywhere and the children sent to the country to harvest sugar beets. In January 1953 plenty of kolkhoz potatoes lay under the snow; the meadows had remained unown; the grain had not been carted into barns but had sprouted in the fields; the people were still threshing what they had managed to bring in. Nobody cared about the grain still in

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the fields. If the kolkhozniks had been told that they would get half of that grain, they would somehow manage to bring it in. However, the only thing that matters to the state is that nobody touches the unharvested grain. That would bring the culprit to forced labour.

16. "The kolkhoz chairmen are appointed by the CP, as is the rest of the management. The chairman and the agronomist are usually Latvians. The CP secretary (partorg) is often a Jew or a Soviet. As the entire management steals as much as it can, it closes its eyes to the misdeeds of the members; only when some Komsomol boy complains do they have to take steps.
17. "There are considerably more women on the kolkhozes than men. More men are deported for various offences; a certain number of men work as lumberjacks all year round; and at 18 years of age the young men are drafted into the army, nominally for three years but actually for five to seven as military service may be prolonged arbitrarily. When they enter military service the young men are struck off the list of a kolkhoz and need not return to it after service. Hardly any do return; they try to get a job in town where life is somewhat easier. No other members may leave the kolkhoz, not even cripples. Only children who are very gifted may go to schools in town. They must study very well for if they get an indifferent mark, they are returned to the kolkhoz."

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